

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE HOUSING

Of the

Suffolk County Legislature

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Workforce Housing of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on March 29, 2006.

Members Present:

Legislator Kate Browning • Chairperson
Legislator Jack Eddington • Vice•Chair
Legislator Vivian Vilorio•Fisher
Legislator Thomas Barraga
Legislator Lynne Nowick

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan • Counsel to the Legislature
Ian Barry • Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Terry Pearsall • Chief of Staff/Presiding Officer Lindsay's Office
Barbara LoMoriello • Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Michael Cavanaugh • Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Glenn Pichardo • Aide to Legislator Browning
Richard Baker • Deputy Clerk/SC Legislature
Seth Squicciarino • Aide to Legislator Vilorio•Fisher
Ed Hogan • Aide to Legislator Nowick

Greg Moran • Aide to Legislator Nowick
Lance Reinheimer • Assistant Director/Budget Review Office
Joe Muncy • Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn • Assistant County Executive
Jim Dahroug • County Executive Assistant
Marian Zucker • Director of Affordable Housing Division • Department
of Economic Development & Workforce Housing
Jacqueline Caputi • Assistant County Attorney
Sandy Sullivan • Legislative Liaison/AME
Paul Arfin • HomeShare Long Island
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney • Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 2:26 P.M. *)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Welcome to Labor & Workforce Housing. Today is •• I don't know what date it is. If everyone could stand so we can start with the Pledge of Allegiance; Jack Eddington, please

Salutation

Good afternoon, everyone. I know, Lynne, you said you had something to do today or no?

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. We'd like to kind of go out of order and start with the resolutions.

We do have a presentation with Paul Arfin from Home Share Long Island. We have no cards.

Okay, we'll start with some Tabled Resolutions.

Tabled Resolutions

1075•06 • To evaluate County properties for workforce housing purposes (Alden). Do I have a motion?

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Motion.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Well, I think Ben is coming up to talk about it.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, sorry.

MR. ZWIRN:

Madam Chair, I was just wondering if we could indulge the committee one more time. We have tried to sit down with Legislator Alden and tried to work out some sort of a compromise on this so it doesn't •• what he's asking for is an enormous undertaking on the part of the department and we're trying to see if we can get it to be focused on properties of five acres or more. In other words, we'll be looking at every piece of land, we're looking at County parks. I mean, it's just an enormous undertaking when you're looking at all the County properties and we're trying to see if we can refine it, at least exclude County parks from some of this.

And so we just beg your indulgence one last time. We're not opposed to the concept, but we'd like to see if we can just put some parameters on it.

LEG. NOWICK:

Motion to table.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, motion to table by Legislator Nowick.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second, Jack Eddington. All in favor? Opposed? Abstain?

Tabled (VOTE: 5•0•0•0).

1177•06 • Adopting Local Law No. 2006, a Local Law to encourage affordable housing and workforce housing initiatives in towns and villages (Schneiderman).

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Motion to table.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Motion to table.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Second.

MR. ZWIRN:

Madam Chair, one of the things we're looking for from Legislator Schneiderman is an example of where this has ever been a problem. Generally it's not the County standing in the way of affordable housing, it's the towns and villages who control the zoning. So there has •• we're not aware of any instance where this law, if it was the County Planning Commission that stood in the way of a project on behalf of a town or village moving forward where the County Planning Commission said that they found it unacceptable to make it a super majority to override them. So we've just •• this may be a solution in search of a problem as opposed to anything that has happened in the past. So we're just asking for an example of where this happened so that we can believe it's a real •• it will have some real significance.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Legislator ••

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Motion to table by Vivian ••

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

•• Browning? That's precisely why I made the motion to table, because having been a Commissioner on the Affordable Housing Commission, it was not the County that was holding up the projects, it was on the town level. So I, too, would like to see an example of where the opposite held true.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So the motion to table was from Legislator Viloria•Fisher, second was Legislator Eddington. All in favor? Opposed? Abstain?

Tabled (VOTE: 5•0•0•0).

Okay, ***Introductory Resolution 1252•06 • Amending the 2006, 2007, 2008 Management Salary Schedules for employees ••***

MR. NOLAN:

I got this on my agenda, but this came back, 1139; we haven't taken care of that one yet.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Did we not do that? Oh, I'm sorry. Sorry, we missed one.

Tabled Resolution 1139•06 • Amending the Suffolk County Classification & Salary Plan and 2006 Operating Budget in connection with a new position title in the Department of Public Works (Public Works Capital Project Manager) (County Executive).

Motion?

LEG. NOWICK:

Why was this tabled?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I don't know.

MR. NOLAN:

I think the question revolved around the fact that the new position is a grade 35 and the position being abolished is a grade 17, and I think that the Legislators wanted some explanation of that.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Jeff is here.

MR. MARTELL:

I'm not here on that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

You're not here on that? Okay.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Well, I also had another question, Madam Chair, on that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Ben is here on that.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I also had another question about this which was part of the motion to table.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Is your microphone on?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Your mike is not on.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I'm sorry.

MS. MAHONEY:

It's on, just hold it close.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Hold it close; okay, sorry.

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah, this was ••

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

I'm sorry, I was speaking, you couldn't tell because my mike wasn't on. But I supported the tabling motion because I wasn't certain if the qualifications of the person who would be holding this position would be such that would put him in the position of almost overseeing the Commissioner of Public Works, because it would kind of be a clerk•of•the•works for the whole County, and I haven't been satisfied with the explanation.

MR. ZWIRN:

I think that the County Executive proposed this because he thinks that we need some help on our Public Works Department. There's so many projects that are under way in Public Works or about to get under way that he thought that one more person who had these kind of qualifications to help facilitate some of these projects would be helpful.

I mean, one of the things that we •• we've got the jail coming on. Originally they wanted to have the Dormitory Authority oversee that, that didn't work out so it's now going to be a part of Public Works. They're just going to be •
• have an awful lot to do with the County Center going forward. There's so many projects and some of them are lagging behind or not getting done in a timely manner. It's frustrating for the Legislature, it's frustrating for the County Executive, even projects that money has been appropriated.

And it's not a reflection on Public Works, it's just that they have an awful lot to do. So the County Executive had suggested let's get one more professional in there, one more person in the pipeline that we might be able to contact and get some specific answers on these projects on a regular basis; it's just really giving them a hand as well. But I know it has been perceived as somebody who is going to shadow the Commissioner of Public

Works, but that's not the case. I mean, we have a very •• pardon?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Through the Chair. Through the Chair, if I may, Madam Chair. The •• my understanding is that there is no list from which this name will be taken ••

MR. ZWIRN:

That's correct.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

•• because this is a new title. But we also •• so it will be an appointment at the gate, at the starting point it will be an appointment. If there is an individual who's being considered, perhaps we could know the credentials of that individual; is the individual an engineer? I think it would be difficult for the Commissioner who is an engineer to take direction and the department has engineers who are working on these projects. Is the person credentialed enough to be in this position? And I don't know if I've seen a resume of the person that you have in mind, if there is indeed a person in mind. So I just would like more information, more substantive information about this.

MR. ZWIRN:

There are, I think, one or two people under consideration, but the problem is that they are now employed by other municipalities and to release that information would jeopardize their positions in where they are now and the County Executive would be reluctant to do that because we're not sure that the Legislature is going to move forward on this proposal.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, but I think that in order for us to move forward that's basically what they're asking for ••

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

It's a catch•22.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

•• is give us who you're talking about and let us know who they are with a

reference.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Well, at least if it's not the who, at least we could know what kind of credentials you're basing this on, you know, so we can know.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, I think the credentials are laid out in Civil Service under this particular title. And it would be a provisional appointment subject to a test, so this person would be taking quite a chance in the sense that they would be appointed provisionally and then they would have to finish in the top three of a particular Civil Service exam.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, Legislator Eddington.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Chair. I was just wondering what would be the chain of command, the Commissioner and then this person, or how will it flow?

MR. ZWIRN:

The Commissioner would still be the head of the department. This person would be another person, below the Commissioner but it's somebody with the credentials and, you know, the authority to be able to contact the County Executive and work with the County Executive on some of these specific projects going forward. I mean, we're just a little frustrated now and I imagine the Legislature is frustrated, too, on some of the projects that they, you know, feel are close to their hearts. We're just not getting them done as quickly as we think we might be able to if we had a little more help over there.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And just one more, is this a request from the Commissioner for assistance in getting the work done?

MR. ZWIRN:

No.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Nowick, you have a question?

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah, I don't know whether Ben can answer this or Budget Review, but I'm not so sure I understand how if you put a grade 35 in the position, and it •• it says here in the resolution that, "There is sufficient and uncommitted funds in the 2006 Department of Public Works budget," and how that's done is you take out a grade 17, but isn't that quite a disparity in salary; how does that work? Or is the grade 17 making that much money, or maybe I'm misunderstanding.

MR. REINHEIMER:

A grade 17/step one with benefits is about \$57,000 and a grade 35/step one is an annual salary with fringes of 110.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay, so ••

MR. REINHEIMER:

I stand corrected on the 17; with fringes •• yeah, it's 57,000. There is sufficient appropriations based on payroll projections and the number of filled positions in the Department of Public Works. So even though specifically this position was not budgeted at the higher grade, there are sufficient surplus appropriations in that department to fill a higher grade.

LEG. NOWICK:

And those surplus appropriations come from jobs that aren't filled, or where do they come from?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Right, the difference between what was budgeted for filled positions and the difference for how many positions are filled today.

LEG. NOWICK:

All right, so possibly it will be a grade 17 on one side and then there will be another job on the other side, another grade on the other side and that will add up to the 105,000 or whatever it is?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Right, there's sufficient turnover savings.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay, thank you.

MR. ZWIRN:

But they're eliminating one position so that there won't be an extra person in the department.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, I think we'd like to make a motion to table. I'll make a motion to table so we can get answers that we need.

LEG. NOWICK:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second by Legislator Nowick. All in favor? Opposed? Abstain?

Tabled (VOTE: 5•0•0•0).

Introductory Resolutions

1252•06 • Amending the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Management Salary Schedules for employees who are excluded from Bargaining Units that are assigned a grade in the Official Suffolk County Classification & Salary Plan (Lindsay). Anyone have anything they'd like to say?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Jeff.

MR. TEMPERA:

Actually, yes. I'm sorry. Jeff Tempera, Director of Labor Relations. Just a couple of things I want to point out with regards to this resolution.

The resolution •• and the County Executive fully supports this resolution, but I think there's issues that need to be looked at when you review the resolution. We're capping •• we're reducing the steps. The steps now go anywhere from 4.4 up to 5%; different ranges based on when the salary schedule was set up many, many years ago. As a matter of fact, it was originally off of the AME schedule and it's more fit to what it is today. AME redid their schedule, they have an integrated salary schedule, each step is 3% apart on all grades.

When you look at the current work force of management employees and you pull out the elected officials and you pull out the Board of Elections where they don't have steps, there's approximately 424 individuals that are covered by this resolution, of that, I think there's 67 who are at top step. You're then dealing with about 357 individuals who are entitled to the steps, they'll have to be placed somewhere on this new schedule. To place them on the new schedule the parameters are you have to •• they would be put as close to 3% as possible but in no circumstance would they receive an increase beyond that which they would have received under the current salary plan. So I've got a top end and I don't have a bottom end, but we've got a target of 3%.

Of the numbers I just threw out to you •• and I apologize, I don't want to bore you with the numbers •• but of the numbers we've got 75 of the 357 that fall directly into the 3%. We've got an additional 181 individuals who would receive greater than 3% but lower than the step they would have received in the current salary plan. And just to give you an idea, you're dealing with increases, again, anywhere from over 4% to •• of the 181 I think there are two people who wind up with a 5% increase? So we're then setting up, and it's a one•time transition, where you're going to have people getting 3% and some people getting 5%.

There's another group that I want to bring to the attention of everyone that causes a little bit more concern because you've got approximately 101 individuals who go beyond •• to grant them the increase and stay within the 3% and not exceed their current step, they're going to get very low increases if they're just placed on this salary schedule; and when I say low increases, it would be anywhere from 1.5% to 2.2%, that's because they're capped at the top end. If that cap was removed and they were put into the step that would grant them at least a 3% raise without that top end, they would receive raises anywhere from 4.5% to 5.3%. Once we get through the transition, every year thereafter they will get the same 3% increase.

There's another group, and this is a group we've all dealt with in the past but for new Legislators we'll bring it up again one more time. We do have a group of employees at the college that received raises as part of the 04•05 budget, we brought it to the attention of the Legislature at the time that the salary plan came up that these individuals were double dipping, they have received increases up to \$21,000 as a result of a placement on the salary schedule back in '04 into '05 and they then received as a result of the Management Salary Plan a \$1,925 bonus plus a 3% increase on January 1, '05. That's not dealt with in this resolution at all and I would throw it out to whether the Legislators •• if that's another concern that you'd like me to deal we with because that is something where we bought up in the past that there has been double dipping involved.

And really, I think I just wanted to bring this all to your attention. If we do move forward with this resolution and we do support it, those were a couple of the issues that I'm charged with dealing with.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So you're suggesting we table it.

MR. TEMPERA:

I'm not suggesting you table it. If that's the wishes ••

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

It sounded like it.

MR. TEMPERA:

Well, again, I think ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

We inferred that a tabling was good.

MR. TEMPERA:

I'm sorry. I'm just saying, there are issues that are out there that need to be dealt with. If it's the will of the body to remove the cap that's fine and then tabling would obviously be in order. If not, there is a mechanism that I could deal with within the current resolution, it causes some angst probably of the payroll reps and it's a •• it would have to red circle 101 people and give them a non•standard rate for up to a year.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Could we get a BRO comment on it, please?

MR. TEMPERA:

And let me complement, by the way, BRO on coming up with the sample salary schedule, I think they did a great job in working very hard to come up with that schedule.

MR. REINHEIMER:

This schedule standardizes the delta between each step as the old management plan morphed into what it is today. It's inconsistent, as Jeff said; there are people that would receive four and a half percent increases and some that would receive somewhat less than that. This standardizes the delta between steps but keeps the lower and upper bounds as the current system. So the intent of this resolution is to give standardized steps, similar to what the people at AME received, now that exempts will be getting automatic step increases, but does not intend to give anybody a greater raise than they currently would be getting.

One of the issues that Jeff raised were the 101 people that would get a raise somewhat less than 3%. However, because there's a cap saying they can't get greater than what they can get, placing them on the current proposed

system, salary schedule, would result in an increase greater than what they would have received under the current system.

This resolution does have a RESOLVED clause that allows the Director of Labor Relations to administer the resolution. And there are administrative ways where Jeff could handle those 101 people without tabling this resolution, a term that he used ••

MR. TEMPERA:

Non•standard rate?

MR. REINHEIMER:

•• non•standard rate, so he could do that. Whenever you transition 350 people that are in•step into a new salary schedule, there's always an exception no matter what. This resolution gives the Director of Labor Relations the latitude to make administrative decisions so that the intent of the resolution is that people aren't resulting with greater raises than they currently would be getting and it transitions. It also, by the end of next year, everybody would be on this system and there would be probably no exceptions, unless there is one; there's always one.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Vivian, you have a question?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Yes, I had a question.

MR. REINHEIMER:

And this does result in a savings of approximately \$175,000 annually, this year would be half, half a year.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Okay, this is a question for either one of you because it's referring to that RESOLVED. Because I was going to suggest that we table until we could play with that transition period a little bit so that it's more fair. I like the fact that this standard •• that this creates a standard and it standardizes the steps, but if you have the latitude, Jeff, to use this tool so that no employee

receives more than the legislative intent, can we also •• do you also have the latitude •• because I don't know if I read the RESOLVED correctly or read this carefully enough. Do you also have the latitude to be certain that no one receives less than a certain percentage if you could be directed not to have those 101 people, let's say, if you were to say that those 101 people couldn't go less than 3%?

MR. TEMPERA:

And again, you're asking the question that really why I'm before you. You've given all this latitude and authority to me and, quite frankly, I could say that we're going to place them at anywhere from 1.7 because that's the closest I can get to the salary plan, or a 2.2% raise; I don't think that's fair. I would look to come up with another manner of trying to address it. Whether •• and I even checked with the MIS system or with the payroll reps to make sure how this would affect them on such a widespread area. That's •• I mentioned the non•standard, I would really like to have the resolution specify and come to agreement with everybody as to which direction you want to go in. If I've got the authority to move in that direction and go this way ••

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

We're going to make a motion to table. I'm going to make a motion to table because I think we should work with the sponsor on getting the direction.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So we have a motion to table by Legislator Vilorina•Fisher. Do we have a second?

LEG. EDDINGTON:

I'll second it.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, second, Jack Eddington. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. BARRAGA:

Opposed.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Abstain? Okay, ***tabled (VOTE: 4•1•0•0 Opposed: Legislator Barraga).***

******SEE CHANGE IN VOTE ON PAGE 13******

Okay, the next one ••

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Lance was trying to say something.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, sorry, Lance.

MR. REINHEIMER:

I just want to say one word; tabling this would mean that it wouldn't be acted on until May the soonest. One of the problems we're trying to get this, if you want, implemented for July 1st payroll, there may be problems with IT in terms of use •• substituting one payroll schedule for another, I'm not sure but that may be a problem.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Did we call the vote?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

We did call the vote.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

No, I don't think ••

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, we called it. You want to withdraw?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

I'm going to make a motion to reconsider.

LEG. NOWICK:

Without recommendation?

LEG. EDDINGTON:

I'll second that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second •• where am I going?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Seconded by Jack Eddington.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second by Legislator Eddington on reconsidering the motion to table.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I would like to make a motion to discharge without recommendation.

LEG. NOWICK:

Second.

MR. NOLAN:

You need a vote on the motion to reconsider.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

All in favor? Opposed? You're losing me.

MR. NOLAN:

On the motion to reconsider, you need a vote.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. The motion to reconsider, okay. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstain? **1252 is reconsidered VOTE: 5 • 0 • 0 • 0.**

Okay, now we're going to go back again. **1252 • 06 • Amending the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Management Salary Schedules for employees who are excluded from Bargaining Units that are assigned a grade in the Official Suffolk County Classification & Salary Plan (Lindsay).**

Do we have a motion?

LEG. BARRAGA:

So moved.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, motion by Legislator Barraga. Second ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

What was your motion, Tom?

LEG. NOWICK:

I thought we were going to make a motion to discharge without recommendation; isn't that what you said?

MR. NOLAN:

Right.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, no, reconsider the vote.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

It was too soon, I jumped the gun. What's your motion, Tom?

LEG. BARRAGA:

I just move to report the bill.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Just moving it.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay, just move it to approve. I'll second that.

LEG. NOWICK:

You got it now.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? Abstain?
1252 is approved (VOTE: 5•0•0•0).

MS. MAHONEY:

That's not to discharge, right, it's to approve?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

No, to approve.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

To approve, now that we're all confused; I don't know about you, but I am.
1252 is approved (VOTE: 5•0•0•0).

1337•06 • Authorizing the sale of County•owned real property pursuant to Section 72•h of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Babylon for affordable housing purposes (0100•055.00•03.00•006.000) (County Executive).

MS. ZUCKER:

Hello. I'm here if you have any questions.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Hi, Marian. Any questions? No? I'll make a motion.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

She wants to speak.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, she just wants to •• you just want to answer questions if we have any?

MS. ZUCKER:

Yeah. It's a vacant piece of land that the County has taken in tax foreclosure, the Town of Babylon has requested it for affordable housing purposes. They intend to transfer it, as they normally do, to one of the non•profit groups that they work with that will build a house and sell it to one of their first•time home buyers.

LEG. NOWICK:

Motion to approve.

LEG. BARRAGA:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, Legislator Nowick has approved, second is Jack Eddington.

All in favor? Opposed? Abstain? Okay, ***it's approved***

(VOTE: 5•0•0•0).

MS. ZUCKER:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Motion to adjourn?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, we have a presentation. Okay, we have our presentation, we have Paul Arfin from the Home Share Long Island. Thank you for coming and I'm glad to see you here. I don't know if anybody has ever met Paul with the Home Share Long Island, but I think it's great what you're doing and I know a lot of seniors in my district are very interested in it. So go ahead.

MR. ARFIN:

Okay. Again, thank you, Legislator Browning, for inviting me. And I wanted to go through this briefly with some highlights about why home sharing is an important piece of addressing the need for affordable rental housing in Suffolk County.

I am the President of Intergenerational Strategies, a not•for•profit organization, and we basically help other organizations to develop programs that meet the needs in the community. We're non•profit, privately funded, we don't run programs. Briefly, Long Island is the 7th least affordable ••

has the least affordable occupancy costs on Long Island •• in New York, I'm sorry. Fair market rent for a one•bedroom apartment is \$1,045. A significant percent of households spend more than a third of their household income on housing issues.

There are fewer than 71,000 •• no fewer than 71, 000 Long Island women age 75 and older who live under the Federal poverty guideline. Forty•six thousand Long Island residents age 75 or older, or 48% of the noninstitutionalized 75 year old population live in one•person households, and these numbers are only going to grow. The most rapid population growth in the next nine years is expected to occur during the oldest population group over 85, going up 28% and the impaired by 16%.

I'm going to jump, you know, I don't want to bore you with too many statistics. So Metropolitan Transportation Council and the Regional Planning Board, you know, give you some idea about the disparate growth of the older populations compared to the younger populations; you can just take a look at the last statement that the 16 to 34 year old age group is expected to grow by less than 1%. I remember when I moved to Suffolk County in the late 60's, more than half the population was under 21.

Social issues and trends of the aging. We have the adult children of the people over the age of 75, people like myself who are 65 and in their 50's are unable to house their parents in their homes, they may have too small a home, their parents may need supervision, the parents •• the children may be working, they can't afford home care, the home is too small. With few housing choices available to them, many families prematurely place their parent in assisted living and in nursing homes, and we all pay for that through Medicaid, at least in the Medicaid.

I'm going to jump to Suffolk's older adult population, you see obviously as we get older the population gets smaller, but this represents now almost 12% of the total population over 65, almost 12%. It's going to grow to about 20%, it's going to grow to about 20% in the next few years.

I'm just going to go to the •• people widowed, 75,000 in Suffolk County. Annual household income six years ago of people over the age of 75 ••

again, in Suffolk •• 38% with incomes under \$20,000. What's the impact? Some elders remain in their homes even though they are unable to maintain them, thus impacting property values. Some elders enter an assisted living facility paying in excess of \$3,000 a month. Some elders spend down their assets in order to qualify for Medicaid, thus placing a tax burden on the public. Some elders move off of Long Island taking their assets and their buying power with them.

So I'm mainly here today to talk about home sharing as one of the options, but there are other options and I'm just going to touch on them. Home sharing is two or more unrelated people sharing a single family home. The zoning codes in Suffolk County's western townships, in Nassau County's •• all the townships; one or more persons, whether or not related by blood, occupying a single one•family dwelling and living as a functional equivalent of a natural family is considered a family. So a lot of people •• I've spoken to elected and appointed officials as well as the public at large •• think that you need to get a permit to rent a room in your house; you don't, thus there is no need for a homeowner to obtain a permit to be a home sharer.

What are the benefits? Companionship, safety and security, financial stability and the possibility of getting services from the home sharer to the homeowner. Independence, using existing housing stock, stabilizes the neighborhood, less turnover because the older person can stay there an extra few years, and it provides piece of mind because references and background checks are completed, unlike under a traditional rental agreement. We hire a firm just like a company would hire a firm to check the background •• do background checks for an employer or employees, we do the same both for the homeowner and the home sharer.

The process is an initial screening leading to a home visit or an office visit, leading to reference checks on the home seeker to make sure they have a history of stable employment, criminal background checks, and then taking a look at the people's personalities and the interviews we've had with them and determining what matches we think would make sense. And then we're available for follow•up in the event that a match breaks down that we're available to help them find another match, unlike a traditional landlord/tenant relationship where the landlord basically has to go back to

the Pennysaver to find somebody.

The homeowner is generally speaking over 60 years of age. What we're finding with our first nine matches is they're really over 75 of the people who are looking to share their home. They have a private bedroom, a shared or private bath, they're independent, you know, in other words it's not somebody with Alzheimer's Disease, it's not somebody who is dependent upon the home seeker to provide care for them, and they may or may not charge rent, they usually do; our average rental request of a home seeker is \$500 a month ranging from 400 so far to 700.

The home sharer has to be at least 18 years of age, have a stable income, they must agree to a criminal background check and they must be independent, they can't be, you know, some 18 year old who has run away from home. References; employer, co•worker, this is all taken very seriously. We look at personal characteristics, geographical considerations. For four months we've had a home of two retired social workers in Medford and we haven't found a match for them in the Medford area, so that's part of the challenge, you know, that we •• right now we have dozens of people awaiting matches. Furniture and storage issues, male/female, the owner may prefer another woman, you know, man•to•man, pets/no pets, smoking and non•smoking; so this all has to be factored in to the equation. I guess I was jumping there.

A 20 year old program in Atlanta, Georgia, currently has 435 matches. In fact, I spoke to them this morning, they have another 300 that they have gotten over the last year. Why? Katrina. Yes, yes, the churches and synagogues in Atlanta came forth and here's a good, stable, time tested program and folks entered this program, you know. I'll just mention that we have a number of immigrants in this County; this could be one of the situations that's presented to some of our new immigrants, as well as the public•at•large, to help them find affordable rental housing.

Home sharing compared to renting. The background checks and the reference checks, most landlords don't do these things, and finding another home sharer in the event a match doesn't work out. The homeowner may be too busy or feel uncomfortable completing these activities.

I'm just going to mention, the general point I want to make is that most older people want to age in place, they want to live and die in the home where they raised their children and where usually their husbands have passed before them. And what we •• in my opinion, what we need to do is to look at ways, not just home sharing, but co•housing, community land trust, and I have information and I'd be •• about these alternatives.

In conclusion, this is hot off the press from the _Bookings_ Institution who did a study of America's oldest suburbs, and Nassau is considered one but Suffolk isn't, but I think the messages go for Suffolk as well. They say all but the most fortunate seniors will confront an array of constraints on their household budgets, even as they continue to seek an active community life.

And lastly, the aging of the population will require a continuum of housing responses ranging from helping seniors age in place to the production of new single•family home communities, service•enriched apartments and continuing care retirement communities. And I would add on to it the things I said before about home sharing and otherwise.

I know that, you know, this Legislature and the County Executive and the business community and the union community all are very concerned about workforce housing for young people, and I present the logic that we should not ignore this growing population of older people that all not, as I heard one very •• one, how should I say, major business person say, "I don't want to hear any more about older people, all they want to do is complain about their taxes." Well, that may be representative of the attitudes of some people, but I raise the question what is our responsibility to our parents and how do we want to be treated in 10, 20, 30 years if we want to continue to live here? And we need to build multi •• what's the term, intergenerational housing, if you will, and housing that's multi•use.

The elderly who are frail and dependent and who age in place, there are some programs that I highlighted or I've jumped over them in a past slide, but just to give you a very •• let me see if I can •• okay.

No, I missed it. Anyway, no•brainer idea, it's called Beacon Hill; you've

heard of Beacon Hill up in Boston, this was in the Wall Street Journal recently. A group of people over the age of 75, they're neighbors, they said, "Hey listen, we're all getting to the point where we can't take care of ourselves the way we used to. How about we chip in some money, 500 bucks each and we hire a case manager to help us stay in our houses longer." To find •• you know, to arrange for the taxi, to arrange for the meals•on•wheels, to arrange for the companionship services, to mow the lawn and rake the leaves and shovel the snow and to do all of those things that people increasingly are not going to be able to do themselves.

So we need to invest some time and money in thinking about these things and planning for our future. Otherwise our parents, my 90 year old mother and my mother•in•law at 90, you know, they're going to go into nursing homes before they need them because we're not prepared for people like them and there's only going to be more and more of them.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

MR. ARFIN:

If you have any questions about home sharing or anything else.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yes, we do. Legislator Eddington has a question.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Just a quick question. You mentioned two retired social workers in Medford; I'm just wondering, did anybody give you my name? Because my wife and I are retired social workers in Medford, so I was just wondering.

MR. ARFIN:

That's funny; Are you looking for a home sharer?

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Well, I didn't think I was. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Nowick.

MR. ARFIN:

A real Coincidence, yeah. But this is one of the things that Legislators could do, because I have spoken with Legislator Browning and visited her office and you're a place where people come when they have an issue. We'd be happy to come and make presentations to senior citizen groups and to distribute, have literature at your offices. You know, affordable rental housing, it's a win/win for the younger working person and the older person.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, actually I spoke with a representative from the 106 and I know we had a conversation and they're having a retention problem and that's something that can be helpful to them. The community college, that's another place where there's a problem, I know they talked and one of the programs they have, they have some kids coming from Queens to I believe the Selden Campus and, you know, that's an issue for them.

MR. ARFIN:

I handed you I think six examples of active matches right now to see, you know, the human dimensions of this are very, very touching. That the home sharer often is somebody who is raking the leaves and, you know, pruning the bushes and taking great pride in this because he no longer owns a home and he feels good about himself, the older person feels good that, you know, her house is being maintained and stuff like that. So it's alive and well, we have •• like I said before, we have dozens of people that are awaiting matches now.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Nowick has a question.

LEG. NOWICK:

Not a question, just a few comments, and thank you for your presentation. I just wanted to mention a few things.

First of all, I just wanted to say about the couple, 24 and 26 and living with an older person, which is not a problem; Geez, I could never see my daughters mowing that lawn at 26. But, you know, this was interesting when I heard about it months ago, but recently I've had more time to think about this with my own parents. You have a situation here, and I know it happens more often, where a person maybe is blind in one eye, going blind •• macular •• the longer people are living the more the macular is hitting. And I think one of the most important things for them is that they stay in their home for two reasons; one, that they love their home, that's all they know. But the second one is that that's the home that they know how to get around in.

MR. ARFIN:

Good point, yeah.

LEG. NOWICK:

They know how to touch everything. If they have slight ability to see, they can get around in that home, it makes it a very, very important thing. And as I said before, I realize this recently with my Dad in the hospital and my Mom who couldn't drive; people at this age are needing help more and more and it needs to be somebody who can help themselves in a way of having a place to stay, help the elderly and make a match. I would love to have seen one or two of these couples, if you will, I don't know what else to call them and listen to them tell us about their experience.

MR. ARFIN:

Well, if I could just say that Greg _Cergol_ on NBC is planning to do a story and Lea Tyrell is going to do one on News 12, they're going to be visiting some homes and doing a story. You know, what we're finding is people really cherish their confidentiality, so most people are not willing when we ask about, you know, having a TV camera in the house, they'll talk to you over the phone kind of think, but just kind of functional paranoia, that's understandable about that. But I think one of the illustrations on the sheet that I handed out was of a blind person and it's a very good example •

LEG. NOWICK:

I see, blind in one eye, and I know it's ••

MR. ARFIN:

And that's the example of one of the focus, foci that we can concentrate on, is homebound, you know, people with limited site.

LEG. NOWICK:

They know their own home, they know how to put the oven on or do things because they're used to it. But just quickly, and I think I understand, this was started elsewhere?

MR. ARFIN:

Yes, in Atlanta •• actually it started in Denmark I think in the 60's and it's in different parts of the world, in Australia and in Germany and the United Kingdom and in other places, Spain it represents 5% of college housing.

LEG. NOWICK:

Is it in other states?

MR. ARFIN:

Okay, so in America it's fairly new, in the last 20 years or so. There's a big suburban program in San Mateo County, California, with over 200. But the largest one I found is the one in Atlanta, so that's the one, we heard about it, I brought the Director of program up here to familiarize, you know, us with the details and what to expect and one of the things is that this is not for everybody, obviously.

LEG. NOWICK:

We know that.

MR. ARFIN:

And Even with Atlanta where they have 435 matches, it takes six prospects to make one match; okay? So it's very labor intensive. So where I'm leading with that, in part, is we have requested •• we're requesting some funding support from the Legislature because we're getting so many calls that we have to choose, do we handle the call that comes in today or do we follow•up on the one that came in two weeks ago?

So we are submitting a resolution, but I must say as long as I'm here that this Legislature and the County Executive signed off on a resolution for a \$15,000 grant for this program last year and we are told that there is no assurance that we will receive that money, that it is in the County Executive's Office or in the Budget Office, it's somewhere and nothing •• we cannot •• don't plan on getting this money.

LEG. NOWICK:

Can we as a committee find out what happened to the grant?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Well, I was one of the sponsors of that on the Omnibus and I did tell Mr. Arfin that he should mention it here because this is one of the contract situations where we're hoping that we can get it out of the quagmire and have •• this is a very •• now, Paul has been my constituent and working in my district for a long time and he had me at hello with this project. I mean, as soon as he walked in my office I think two years ago, it just makes sense. We did include this in the Omnibus, several of us sponsored it. And so if I could ask the Presiding Officer's Chief of Staff to help ••

MR. PEARSALL:

Absolutely.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

•• follow this. I just found out today that Intergenerational Housing hasn't received this.

MR. ARFIN:

Yeah. You know, I must say I know from talking to colleagues that this is not an isolated case; it is not an isolated case.

MR. PEARSALL:

It is not no, but we'll work on it.

LEG. NOWICK:

Welcome to the County.

MR. ARFIN:

So that's the story. Again, the only thing I would also mention is we have gone to Nassau County, some Legislators and the head of Economic Development & Workforce Housing and one of the Deputy County Executives, and what they invited us to do, based on the presentation, is submit a proposal for funding through their Workforce Housing Initiative. And they are going to pick up the tab for a full-time equivalent person that could have, you know, a caseload of maybe 60, 80 people, you know, and really reach out. So we hope that either through offsets or for sure in the 2000 budget, we could look forward to some bipartisan support on this.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

So you wouldn't have to be dependent on waiting for a grant to be signed every year, you're talking about a position in the County.

MR. ARFIN:

Exactly. I mean, so far we've raised \$110,000 of private dollars for the start •up. And people are paying a fee, they're paying \$200 for a match so we're not •• you know, but that won't cover the full cost. So this needs to be a public/private initiative.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Thank you, Paul.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you for coming.

MR. ARFIN:

Thank you. Thank you again.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And seniors do have a reason to grumble, they do pay two•halve property taxes. So we make a motion to adjourn?

LEG. NOWICK:

Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Nowick, second by Jack Eddington. All right.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 PM*)

***Legislator Kate Browning, Chairperson
Workforce Housing & Labor Committee***

_ _ • Denotes Spelled Phonetically